

***“A Minor Drinking....A Major Problem”***  
**222 Underage Drinking Deaths in 2006,**  
**Too Many Tragedies for California**  
**Activists and State Agencies to Convene Media Event in Sacramento, August**  
**27 to announce newest enforcement and informational initiatives**

Elk Grove, Calif...Sacramento has had it with senseless teen deaths caused by underage drinking.

Early in 2007, agencies working with youth in the Sacramento area recognized the need to take action by speaking about the issue in public, calling on parents to talk to their underage children about the dangers of drinking alcohol, applying pressure on the street through law enforcement efforts, and by collaborating for a greater impact on teen drinking behavior.

Recognizing the need to pool resources, the California-based nonprofit, RADD: The Entertainment Industry's Voice For Road Safety, working with its partners at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), fostered a series of workgroups at UC Davis Medical Center that led to the Sacramento Regional Youth and Alcohol Coalition's founding.

The Sacramento Regional Youth and Alcohol Coalition is hosted by the UC Davis Medical Center. Its members include stakeholders from all walks of life – youth advocates, law enforcement, health care professionals, state agencies, coaches, parents, and students from local high schools and colleges – who joined together to reduce underage drinking and impaired driving by teens in the Sacramento region.

“Alcohol, teens and driving are a lethal combination,” said Christopher J Murphy, director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “The more we can do, as organizations and as parents, to keep teens from drinking and driving, the more lives and futures will be saved.”

The social, physical and emotional trauma of losing teens is far too high. "As an ER physician, I am in a unique position to see the adverse consequences of alcohol abuse first hand", said Dr. Steve Offerman, an emergency medicine physician at Kaiser Permanente's South Sacramento Medical Center. "While underage drinking is nothing new, it has become a great concern for physicians for several reasons, including the fact that we are treating an increasing number of teens in our ERs with alcohol and drug problems."

Out in force on the streets throughout the holiday weekend, the Capitol AVOID's 15 law enforcement agencies and their colleagues from Yolo and Placer AVOIDS will be setting up checkpoints.

In Elk Grove alone, there were 132 DUI arrests in 2007 of young adults between the ages of 19-24, significant because half of these individuals were not legally old enough to drink. The allowable blood alcohol limit for drivers under 21 is zero.

According to Elk Grove Police Department Chief Richard Simmons, "The Elk Grove Police Department takes DUI enforcement seriously, especially when it involves the Youth of our Community. With the collaboration of OTS and ABC we are actively looking for underage DUI drivers and alcohol violations. We will be conducting 2 DUI checkpoints this weekend and we will have a zero tolerance for underage DUI drivers."

## **Sacramento Regional Youth Coalition's Fall Action Items**

Action items announced today by the Coalition are:

- **Community Resource Center:** Launch an introductory web page on the UC Davis Health System web site. The page is designed to grow into a readily accessible site for parents, teens, media and educators to get quick facts, useful information and access to help in the community. Links will provide access to a variety of partners who offer guidelines for parents to talk to teens about alcohol, activities for teens and organized by teens, and upcoming media events. Visit the introductory site at [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/injuryprevention](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/injuryprevention)
- **Community Needs Assessment:** Identify the factors that contribute to underage drinking in the Sacramento area. Teenage drinking is a complex issue that touches on family, school, peers and community.
- **Sacramento Regional Resource Guide:** Compile and publish a comprehensive regional guide for prevention, counseling and rehabilitation of underage drinkers.

Coalition supported outreach by members:

- **Labor Day DUI Crackdown:** Kick-off the for the countywide "Over The Limit. Under Arrest" national campaign to combat drunk driving. Throughout the Greater Sacramento area, law enforcement from over 20 agencies are jointly conducting checkpoints and heightened patrols to get drunk drivers off local roads. The coalition is using the national campaign to focus local attention on unsafe teen driving behavior, youth access to alcohol and drinking and driving by teens.
- **ABC Enforcement Activities:** The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) is working with local law enforcement by running Decoy

Operations that hold accountable those businesses who sell alcohol to persons under 21 and by arresting adults who buy alcohol for those who aren't legally old enough to drink

Applying extra pressure through its Target Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies (TRACE) program. The department now has 4 full time investigators who are tracking down businesses and individuals who supply alcohol to minors who are later killed or injured in alcohol-related crashes, poisonings and other incidents where alcohol is a factor.

**About the Sacramento Regional Youth and Alcohol Coalition.**

The Coalition meets on a bi-monthly basis to collect data, develop objectives and identify resources available to confront the problem of underage alcohol consumption in the Sacramento area. With a mission to improve the health and safety of adolescents through positive change of community response to underage alcohol use, it offers free membership to all organizations and agencies interested in preventing underage drinking. For more information about the Coalition, visit [www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/injuryprevention](http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/injuryprevention) or call Christy Adams at the UC Davis Trauma Prevention Program (916) 734-9794.